

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07
INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 /089 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8559
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 0239

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, SP
SUBJECT: DEBATE ON LABOR REFORM BILL COMMENCES

REF: MADRID 0143

SUMMARY: KICKING OFF THE CORTES DEBATE ON LABOR REFORM,
SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER DE LA MATA DELIVERED A WELL-
BALANCED POSITIVE ADDRESS JANUARY 11. HE DECLARED THAT THE BILL
WAS THE INDISPENSIBLE BASE TO ARRIVE AT LABOR REFORM.
WHILE TRADE UNION REACTION TO THE BILL HAS BEEN ONLY
MODERATELY CRITICAL, THEY DO POINT OUT THAT THE FRANCO-ERA
OFFICIAL SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION HAS YET TO BE DISMANTLED.
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DE LA MATA HOPES TO BE ABLE TO TRAVEL TO GENEVA IN TWO
WEEKS OR SO, AFTER THE EXPECTED PASSAGE OF THE BILL, TO
DISCUSS THE SIGNING OF ILO CONVENTIONS 87 AND 98. END
SUMMARY.

1. THE DEBATE IN THE CORTES ON THE GOVT'S LABOR REFORM
BILL WAS KICKED OFF BY SYNDICAL RELATIONS MINISTER ENRIQUE

DE LA MATA ON JANUARY 11 WHEN HE DELIVERED A VERY WELL-BALANCED, THOUGHTFUL AND POSITIVE ADDRESS TO THE 60-MAN FUNDAMENTAL LAWS COMMITTEE (SEE HIGHLIGHTS BELOW). ALTHOUGH THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE COMMITTEE (HEAVILY SALTED WITH CONSERVATIVE SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION MEMBERS) WAS A BIT FROSTY, DE LA MATA DEFTLY SET THE TONE FOR PASSAGE OF THE BILL. HOWEVER, HEATED DEBATE IS ANTICIPATED IN BOTH COMMITTEE AND PLENARY SESSIONS.

2. NOTING THAT LABOR REFORM MUST GO HAND IN HAND WITH POLITICAL REFORM, DE LA MATA LISTED THREE OBJECTIVES OF THE BILL: A) RECOGNITION OF TRADE UNION FREEDOMS, B) RECIPROCAL INDEPENDENCE BETWEEN LABOR AND EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND C) AUTONOMY OF TRADE UNIONS. OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE WITH REGARD TO GOVT PHILOSOPHY BEHIND THIS LEGISLATION, WAS HIS STATEMENT THAT THE BILL IN ITSELF WAS NOT LABOR REFORM, BUT "THE INDISPENSIBLE BASE TO ARRIVE AT REFORM." AFTER DECLARING THAT FULL FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION IN THE LABOR FIELD WAS A KEY ELEMENT IN PERFECTING LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS, THE MINISTER CAUTIONED THAT TRADE UNION FREEDOM SHOULD STRENGTHEN SOCIAL JUSTICE AND NOT CONVERT THE NATION INTO A BATTLEGROUND. LABOR UNITY COULD NOT BE IMPOSED BY LAW BUT MUST COME VOLUNTARILY AS A RESULT OF FREELY FORMULATED PLURALISM. THE FUTURE STRUCTURE OF SPANISH TRADE UNIONISM AND MANAGEMENT COULD NOT BE DECIDED UNILATERALLY BY THE GOVT, BUT MUST DEPEND UPON THE WISHES OF WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS THEMSELVES. IN HIS FINAL PLEA FOR LABOR REFORM DE LA MATA DECLARED "WE ARE ONLY GOING TO MAKE LEGAL WHAT IS ALREADY IN FORCE AMONG SPANIARDS, CONFIDENTIAL

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BECAUSE PLURALISM IS A FACT OF OUR TIMES." IRREVERSIBLE IN A MODERN AND DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY.

3 WHEN ASKED BY EL PAIS TO COMMENT ON THE LABOR REFORM BILL, THE COMMUNIST-DOMINATED WORKERS COMMISSION (SWC) AND THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST USO WERE ONLY MODERATELY CRITICAL, BOTH NOTING THAT THE OFFICIAL SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO) HAD YET TO BE DISMANTLED. THE SOCIALIST UGT GAVE A POSITIVE EVALUATION, WITH RESERVATIONS, POINTING OUT THAT SUCH PROBLEMS AS THE RIGHT TO STRIKE, THE SHAPE OF FUTURE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND DISPOSITION OF SSO PATRIMONY REMAINED UNSOLVED. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS JANUARY 11 WITH AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE IRVING BROWN AND LABATT, UGT SECGEN NICOLAS REDONDO AND USO INT'L SECRETARY MARIANO ESPUNEZ BOTH EXPRESSED BASIC SATISFACTION WITH THE GENERAL THRUST OF THE LABOR REFORM BILL.

4. SSO INT'L RELATIONS DIRECTOR (AND CORTES MEMBER) FRANCISCO GUERRERO COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS JANUARY 12 TO EMBASSY. THE

FUNDAMENTAL LAWS COMMITTEE WAS WELL-KNOWN AS A STRONG HOLD OF THE BUNKER, BUT EVEN SO, DE LA MATA'S ADDRESS HAD BEEN RECEIVED WITH A CERTAIN GRUDING ADMIRATION. THERE WOULD BE SOME FURTHER HEATED DEBATES, BUT THE POLITICAL REFORM BILL AND THE REFERENDUM HAD BROKEN THE ICE AND THE LABOR REFORM BILL WOULD BE PASSED IN DUE COURSE. WITH RESPECT TO TIMING, GUERRERO SPECULATED THAT THE BILL WOULD COME OUT OF COMMITTEE JANUARY 13 OR 14, BUT MIGHT NOT BE DISCUSSED IN PLENARY SESSION UNTIL LATER IN THE MONTH. DE LA MATA HOPED TO BE ABLE TO GO TO GENEVA IN TWO WEEKS OR SO, AFTER PASSAGE OF THE BILL, TO DISCUSS SPAIN'S SIGNING OF ILO CONVENTIONS 87 AND 98 WITH ILO SEC GEN BLANCHARD. STABLER

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